



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2006

DIAPREPES WEEVILS FOUND IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Exotic Pests Can Damage Crops, Plants

Diaprepes root weevil, an exotic pest, has been found at several locations in the University City area of La Jolla. Left unchecked, this large weevil could damage a significant portion of California agriculture, threatening more than 270 species of plants, including citrus and ornamental plants.

At this time, it is not known how widespread the Diaprepes root weevil population is in this area, but State and County officials have been searching for this insect since it was identified by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) on Tuesday, May 2. A quarantine has not yet been established, but will likely occur once the infested area is determined. Quarantines for this pest were established in Orange and Los Angeles counties in 2005 still include restrictions on the movement of plants, green waste and soil within and from the quarantine zone.

The San Diego County Department of Agriculture, Weight and Measures is working with CDFA in evaluating the best options for management of this weevil population, which may take three to five years to eradicate.

Diaprepes root weevils are native to the Caribbean and generally infest Florida and parts of Texas. Adult weevils feed on the leaves of plants and, in some cases, on citrus fruit. The larvae feed on plant roots. Adults are about three-quarters of an inch in length, with markings on their backs that range from black and orange to cream colored.

The public can help by allowing inspections of properties by officials from AWM and CDFA, not moving plants or soil from this area and reporting suspicious bugs to the **CDFA PEST HOTLINE at 1-800-491-1899**. For more information, please visit AWM's web site, www.sdcawm.org.

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